

Alaska LNG Project Takes Major Workforce Step with Labour Agreement Prioritising Local Hiring

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The Alaska LNG Project has moved a step closer to delivery after project developer 8 Star Alaska and Alaska’s Building Trades signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) designed to secure a skilled local workforce for one of the largest energy infrastructure projects in the state’s history.

The agreement establishes a framework for future Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) covering major construction activities across the multi-billion-dollar liquefied natural gas development, with a clear focus on hiring Alaska workers first.

Signed by the Building and Construction Trades Council of Southcentral Alaska, the Fairbanks Building and Construction Trades Council, the Alaska Petroleum Joint Crafts Council and 8 Star Alaska, the MOU aims to strengthen workforce planning, labour stability and project delivery as the development progresses.

The Alaska LNG Project is expected to create approximately 12,000 construction jobs during development, alongside up to 1,000 permanent operational positions once the facilities are commissioned.

For project leaders, the agreement addresses one of the most significant risks facing large-scale infrastructure developments: securing a reliable and qualified workforce capable of supporting multiple simultaneous construction activities across a geographically challenging programme.

The project spans more than 800 miles and will involve a range of complex facilities, including LNG export

infrastructure, gas treatment facilities, compressor stations, construction camps, logistics hubs and associated site works.

Bronson Frye, President of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Southcentral Alaska, said the state's union workforce is well positioned to support a project of this scale.

"One of the most important ways our state will benefit from Alaska LNG is through the creation of thousands of good-paying construction jobs for Alaska workers," he said. "Alaska unions are uniquely equipped to handle Alaska LNG's workforce challenges, including staffing multiple subprojects spanning more than 800 miles and getting the job done in some of the most extreme conditions anywhere in the world."

The MOU reflects a growing recognition across major capital projects that workforce strategy is becoming as important as engineering, financing and procurement.

Project Labor Agreements have long been used on major infrastructure programmes to provide consistency around employment conditions, workforce availability and dispute resolution. Supporters argue that they reduce delivery risk by providing contractors with access to trained labour pools and established apprenticeship programmes.

Lake Williams, President of the Fairbanks Building and Construction Trades Council, described PLAs as an important project management tool.

"Project Labor Agreements are a critical project management tool," he said. "This MOU ensures that we have a reliable trained union workforce, standardized work rules, predictable labour costs and helps ensure that the project is delivered on time."

The agreement also supports early planning activities for workforce mobilisation, training and logistics, all of which are critical for a project operating across remote locations and challenging environmental conditions.

According to the parties, the MOU will cover future labour agreements associated with Phase One camp construction, camp operations and logistics, as well as major Phase Two facilities including LNG export terminals, gas treatment facilities, compressor stations, module installation and related infrastructure.

Separate labour agreements are expected to be developed for pipeline construction activities, including right-of-way preparation, pipe transport, access roads, storage yards and mainline installation.

Rex Canon, Co-President of 8 Star Alaska, said the project's success will depend heavily on the availability of a skilled local workforce.

"The support and expertise of Alaska's committed union workforce will be critical for ensuring the success of Alaska LNG," he said. "We are committed to building Alaska LNG with a highly skilled Alaska workforce as the first and primary source of construction labour."

As global competition for skilled construction workers continues to intensify, workforce planning is emerging as a defining factor in the successful delivery of major energy projects. The Alaska LNG agreement demonstrates how developers are increasingly integrating labour strategy into programme planning long before major construction begins.

For a project expected to reshape Alaska's energy landscape and position the state as a significant LNG exporter, securing the people needed to deliver it may prove just as important as securing the capital.